

**Remarks in a Christmas Address to the Nation**

*December 22, 2022*

Good afternoon.

"How silently, how silently, the wondrous Gift is given." There is a certain stillness at the center of the Christmas story. A silent night when all the world goes quiet and all the glamour, all the noise, everything that divides us, everything that pits us against one another, everything—everything that seems so important, but really isn't, this all fades away in stillness of the winter's evening.

And we look to the sky, to a lone star, shining brighter than all the rest, guiding us to the birth of a child, a child Christians believe to be the Son of God, miraculously now here among us on Earth, bringing hope, love, and peace and joy to the world.

Yes, it's a story that's 2,000 years old, but it's still very much alive today. Just look into the eyes of a child on Christmas morning, or listen to the laughter of a family together this holiday season after years—after years—of being apart. Just feel the hope rising in your chest as you sing "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," even though you've sung the countless times before.

Yes, even after 2,000 years, Christmas still has the power to lift us up, to bring us together, to change lives, to change the world.

The Christmas story is at the heart of the Christmas—Christian faith. But the message of hope, love, peace, and joy, they're also universal. It speaks to all of us, whether we're Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, or any other faith, or no faith at all. It speaks to all of us as human beings who are here on this Earth to care for one another, to look out for one another, to love one another.

The message of Christmas is always important, but it's especially important through tough times, like the ones we've been through the past few years.

The pandemic has taken so much from us. We've lost so much time with one another. We've lost so many people, people we loved. Over a million lives lost in America alone. That's a million empty chairs, breaking hearts in homes all across the country.

Our politics has gotten so angry, so mean, so partisan. And too often, we see each other as enemies, not as neighbors; as Democrats or Republicans, not as fellow Americans. We've become too divided. But as tough as these times have been, if we look a little closer, we see bright spots all across the country: the strength, the determination, the resilience that's long defined America.

We're surely making progress. Things are getting better. COVID long—no longer controls our lives. Our kids are back in school. People are back to work. In fact, more people are working than ever before. Americans are building again, innovating again, dreaming again.

So my hope this Christmas season is that we take a few moments of quiet reflection and find that stillness in the heart of Christmas—that's at the heart of Christmas, and look, really look at each other, not as Democrats or Republicans, not as members of "Team Red" or "Team Blue," but as who we really are: fellow Americans, fellow human beings worthy of being treated with dignity and respect.

I sincerely hope this holiday season will drain the poison that has infected our politics and set us against one another. I hope this Christmas season marks a fresh start for our Nation,

because there is so much that unites us as Americans, so much more that unites us than divides us.

We're truly blessed to live in this Nation. And I truly hope we take the time to look out—look out for one another. Not at one, for one another.

So many people struggle at Christmas. It can be a time of great pain and terrible loneliness. I know, like many of you know. It was 50 years ago this week that I lost my first wife and my infant daughter in a car accident, and my two sons were badly injured, when they were out shopping for a Christmas tree. I know how hard this time of year can be.

But here's what I learned long ago: No one—no one—can ever know what someone else is going through, what's really going on in their life, what they're struggling with, what they're trying to overcome.

That's why sometimes the smallest act of kindness can mean so much. A simple smile. A hug. An unexpected phone call. A quiet cup of coffee. Simple acts of kindness that can lift a spirit, provide comfort, and perhaps maybe even save a life.

So this Christmas, let's spread a little kindness. This Christmas, let's be that helping hand, that strong shoulder, that friendly voice when no one else seems to care for those who are struggling, in trouble, in need. It just might be the best gift you can ever give.

And let's be sure to remember the brave women and men in uniform who defend and protect our Nation. Many of them—many of them—are away from their families at this time of year. Let's keep them in our prayers.

You know, and I believe Christmas is a season of hope. And throughout the life of this country, it's been during the weeks of December—even in the midst of some of our toughest days—that some of the best chapters of our story have been written.

It was during these weeks back in 1862 that President Lincoln prepared the Emancipation Proclamation, which he issued on New Year's Day.

At Christmas 1941, in the week—weeks after Pearl Harbor, Franklin Delano Roosevelt hosted Winston Churchill in this White House. Together, they planned the Allied strategy to defeat fascism and autocracy.

And it was 1968 that the most terrible year—of years, a year of assassination and riot, of war and chaos, that the astronauts of *Apollo 8* circled the Moon and spoke to us here on Earth. From the silence of space, on a silent night on a Christmas Eve, they read the story of Christmas—Creation from the King James Bible. It went: "In the beginning God created Heaven and Earth. And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."

That light's still with us, illuminating our way forward as Americans and as citizens of the world. A light that burned in the beginning and at Bethlehem. A light that shines still today in our own time, our own lives.

As we sing "O Holy Night"—"His law is love, and His Gospel is peace"—may I wish you and for you, and for our Nation, now and always, is that we'll live in the light: the light of liberty and hope, of love and generosity, of kindness and compassion, of dignity and decency.

So from the Biden family, we wish you and your family peace, joy, health, and happiness. Merry Christmas, happy holidays, and all the best in the new year.

God bless you all, and may God protect our troops. Thank you.

*Q.* Mr. President, do you think the southern border—[inaudible]?

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:15 p.m. in the Cross Hall at the White House.

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